

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5, 8 and 11 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1, 8 and 11 being independent.

The independent claims have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art.

The amendments to the claims were not presented earlier as it was believed that the previously presented claims would be found allowable. This Amendment does not add any additional claims. Moreover, the Examiner's familiarity with the subject matter of the present application will allow an appreciation of the significance of the amendments herein without undue expenditure of time and effort. Finally, the Amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search. Accordingly, it is submitted that entry of the Amendment is appropriate.

Claims 1, 5, 8 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Xiong '265 in view of Shum '855 and Teo '413. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of Applicants' invention relates to an image synthesis method comprising an input step, of inputting a plurality of image data representing a plurality of images, a placement information generating step for generating placement information about horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images, determined by the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images represented by the input image data, and a

placement information obtaining step for obtaining the placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region. As amended, a setting step automatically selects and sets one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes based on image placement information of the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region, with each mapping mode corresponding to a different mapping surface, without a user intervening to determine the mapping mode or the corresponding mapping surface. In addition, a synthesis step combines the plurality of images by using the mapping mode set in the setting step, a changing step changes the mapping mode, and a generating step issues a warning and generates a display of a synthesized image in accordance with a predetermined condition, when an image formed by changing the mapping mode does not comply with the predetermined condition set in accordance with the mapping mode.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, a high performance image synthesis image is provided.

The primary citation to Xiong relates to a method for aligning rectilinear images in 3D through projective registration and calibration. The Office Action relies on Xiong for a teaching an input step, a placement information generating step, a placement information obtaining step, a setting step of selecting and setting a mapping mode, a synthesis step, and a changing step.

The secondary citation to Shum relates to an interactive construction of 3D models from panoramic images, and is relied upon primarily for issuing a warning when a synthesized image exceeds a predetermined angle of view.

The Office Action acknowledges that, with respect to the setting step, Xiong does not teach “automatically” selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes as set forth in Applicants’ claimed invention. The tertiary citation to Teo is cited to compensate for this deficiency.

Teo relates to a method for creating a 3D panorama from 3D rectilinear images. In Teo, an image processor 118 transforms a first digital panoramic image 112 projected on a first surface geometry 108 into a second digital panoramic image 120 projected onto a second surface geometry 116 (see Figure 1A). While this transformation may be automatic, it should not be relied on to teach or suggest the step of automatically selecting and setting a mapping mode based on image placement information in accordance with the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the images as set forth in Applicants’ claimed invention.

To ever further distinguish Applicants’ claimed invention from the cited art, Claim 1, for example, has been amended to emphasize that the setting step of automatically selecting and setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping mode is based on image placement information of the horizontal and vertical placement direction of the plurality of images having a common subject region. To the contrary, Teo is understood to disclose a

process of mapping images onto a cube so that horizontal lines appear horizontal in the panorama, and thus creates a panoramic image with horizontal lines that do not appear concave. As understood, this mapping mode is selected based on user input, and should not be equated with automatically selecting and setting a mapping mode based on image placement information.

Accordingly, without conceding the propriety of combining Xiong, Shum and Teo in the manner set forth in the Office Action, it is submitted that such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention.

Independent Claims 8 and 11 relate to an image synthesis apparatus and a computer-readable storage medium, respectively, and have been amended along the same lines as Claim 1. These claims are thus also submitted to be patentable.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

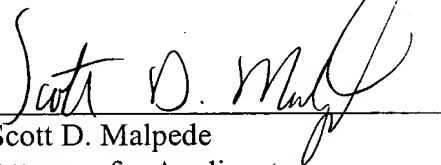
Therefore, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1, 8 and 11 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claim 5 sets forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

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Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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